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at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Bayart (Mongolia) (Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. Roche (Canada) (Chairman)

CONTENTS

- GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 51 TO 69, 139, 141 AND 145 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. MOULTRIE (Bahamas): It is a particular pleasure to have Ambassador Roche preside over the deliberations of this Committee. I have every confidence that he will effectively discharge his duties, and in so doing will continue to advance the progress that the First Committee has made up to this point in streamlining its deliberations and procedures, so that the number of resolutions on which the Committee takes action is limited and the Committee will be able to speak with a unanimous voice.

Canada's participation in the multilateral arms control discussions can only be compared with that of the super Powers. That verification of compliance has constituted a central theme in Canada's approach to disarmament and arms limitation, and indeed the whole question of international peace and security, is of particular importance to my delegation in light of the critical role of verification in the area of confidence-building, which we consider an essential element in the disarmament process. The three studies produced by the Canadian Government on verification continue to serve as basic reference documents on the subject in international negotiations.

The long history of disarmament negotiations under the League of Nations and the United Nations, interrupted by 10 years of preparation for the waging of the Second World War, gives little ground for expecting disarmament by agreement. The trend of military history since 1932 has moved towards the maintenance of larger armies and larger military appropriations. Propaganda instruments and economic controls have developed in every population a more fanatical and aggressive national spirit. The combination of those policies precipitated the Second World War and seem destined to bring about the eventual destruction of civilisation in the

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

form of a nuclear war. Even in light of the general agreement that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought, the nuclear arms race continues at an alarming speed. Neither do prospects for ending the arms race appear on the horizon, since nuclear power States are unwilling to eliminate nuclear weapons, their insignia of greatness. On the contrary, they increase their capability and technical capacity to make even more destructive instruments, and in so doing force non-nuclear Powers to reduce their security by the installation of weapons which make them targets for attack.

The nuclear arms race is a danger even without war. Not only are natural resources squandered in the production of nuclear arsenals but the earth is subsequently polluted with worrisome amounts of radioactive isotopes during the manufacture and especially the testing of these weapons.

The most important condition for disarmament is a sense of security which derives from economic and social development, the protection of human rights, an end to racial discrimination and the protection of the environment, with strict arms control measures. An added sense of security arises from general confidence in the balance of power.

The lack of equality in the power structure of today's world is demonstrated by the fact that about two-thirds of the world's industrial output derives from only six countries, 60 per cent of the world's defence expenditure is accounted for by five countries and 97 per cent of the world's stock of nuclear weapons is controlled by the two super-Powers. It is therefore encouraging that the two major nuclear Powers have shouldered some of the responsibility that such power carries in the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty. Let us hope that this is a step on the road to ensuring that the arrogance of power is not allowed to have the effect of weakening or destroying the peace.

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

In view of the current global distribution of economic resources and technological potential, particularly military capabilities, the process of security must begin with relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and among the two major alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But the developing world is neither immune to the consequences of the East-West conflict nor is it without fault as a contributor to the risk of war. Policies of small countries can have great regional or even global consequences which jeopardize peace. Increasingly, political tensions between East and West affect the developing world, thereby aggravating regional conflicts.

The growing inter-relation between national and international security issues requires a new approach to national security policies and to international co-operation. It is on this spirit of international co-operation that my country relies, while accelerating its war against drugs because of its peculiar position as a transit State, and its effort to protect its marine resources, which is particularly complicated due to its archipelagic make-up.

The concept of security must be dealt with in a comprehensive way: in the context of a better appreciation of the security problems and interests of other countries; and of an acceptance of the important notions which derives from the Charter of the United Nations, that all nations have an inalienable right to security, that military force is not a legitimate instrument for resolving international disputes, that restraint is necessary in pursuing national policies in an interdependent world and that neither military superiority, nor military means offer an adequate answer to security issues in the present or future world.

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

In this context, any efforts by individual countries or by their allied groups to maximize their own security at the expense of other nations must not be tolerated. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations must be respected.

The problem of disarmament is the problem of creating conditions that give general confidence. Factors that help to engender this confidence are education, law and policy and the strengthening of the United Nations. People and Governments must be educated to accept a general picture of the world that is both feasible and desirable - a picture such as that depicted by the Charter of the United Nations, with emphasis on equilibrium, co-operation, co-existence and the peaceful solution of conflicts. Law would give definition to key terms such as recognition, aggression, defence, territorial integrity, political independence and collective security. It would also elaborate such principles as self-determination, respect for human rights, non-intervention in domestic jurisdiction, co-operation for economic and social progress and the practice of tolerance. Practical and national policies would eliminate false images of other nations and exaggerated views of alien ideologies.

Suitable to this end are policies of defence without provocation, conciliation without appeasement and utilization of the United Nations procedure to deal with threats to peace and to settle controversies when diplomacy, mediation, conciliation and the utilization of regional agencies have failed. National policy directives should pay particular attention to the elimination of false fears.

Continuing efforts should be made to strengthen the United Nations, this world Organization. Its systems of collective security should be improved to assure prompt interventions in situations threatening international peace. Procedures for dealing with disputes should be made more available, reliable and effective in assuring just settlements. Procedures for keeping international law up to date should be developed.

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

The desire for peace and security must find expression in practical efforts to remove causes of misunderstanding and to seek grounds for agreement on principles and their application. A will for peace must be established that absolutely precludes the will to fight. This will for peace must find its roots in moral disarmament, which is directly related to material disarmament. When armament budgets are rising and personnel and material increasing, it is safe to assume that international tensions are increasing and that States are morally as well as materially re-arming.

Trust is a major element of moral disarmament. It can be conceived as an attitude based on a mixture of knowledge and uncertainty between interdependent parties, whose potential to harm and help each other is mutually recognized. The risk of betrayal is inherent in the very concept of trust. The use of confidence-building measures must be resorted to in order to reduce the perceived risks of such a betrayal. The assessment of these perceived risks is influenced by two factors: first, the amount of verifiable information about the motives, intentions and capabilities of an adversary; and, secondly, the physical constraints circumscribing his behaviour. Parties that threaten each other with even more deadly weapons for the sake of mutual deference will obviously find it hard to convince one another of their benign intentions, which makes confidence-building measures even more vital.

Two types of confidence are involved: on the one hand, self-confidence in the ability to defend oneself if threatened or attacked; on the other, mutual confidence, implying the notion that neither side in fact intends to threaten or to attack. While the aim must be to engender a mutually reinforcing interaction between the two types of confidence by a combination of subjective and

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

objective steps, the basic dilemma in terms of negotiability in this area must be realized. Experience has proven that it is easier to begin with "soft" objective measures.

But it must be realized that if confidence-building as an approach to arms regulations and disarmament is to have future, the process will have to entail verifiable constraints. That factor helps increase the impact of the INF Treaty, given its provisions for verification.

Some countries, because of their particularly active participation in the area of international security - specifically with regard to nuclear weapons - have been accused of having "nuclear allergy". The Bahamas has been infected by that allergy, as evidenced in its history of involvement in activities in this field, ranging from its signing and ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco to its present chairing of the Disarmament Commission. The Bahamas will do its best further to spread this allergy, because indifference in the face of the nuclear-weapons threat is the greatest enemy to peace.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Trinidad and Tobago): The forty-third session of the General Assembly is taking place at a moment when the international political climate is characterized by a relaxation of tensions, a resurgence of faith and hope in institutional arrangements geared towards searching for peace and security and an atmosphere tending to inspire mutual confidence.

It seems appropriate that we should re-examine the fundamental principles and concepts of security and disarmament and try to determine their suitability and applicability to the contemporary international political situation.

After the Second World War, the concept of deterrence took root as the basis of security. It later developed into the balance of nuclear weapons or, as it is more appropriately called, the balance of terror. But the conceptualization of this balance is intrinsically unilateral in terms of both the quantification and

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad and Tobago)

the capability of nuclear weapons. The inevitable result is an ever spiralling arms race, increasing international insecurity, accelerating mutual suspicion and the diverting of the world's resources into undesirable and unproductive channels.

My delegation is pleased to note the recent improvement in Soviet-United States relations, accompanied as it was by some practical measures of disarmament as well as, more recently, some positive measures taken towards the peaceful settlement of some conflicts. These developments will hopefully launch a search for lasting world peace based on common security, confidence and co-operation among all the nations of the world.

My delegation considers that, given the awesome build-up and possession of military capabilities, a basic element in the search for international peace and security in the contemporary world lies in practical measures of disarmament - that is to say reductions in the nuclear, conventional and chemical arsenals - which should be undertaken in conjunction with efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts, to build confidence among nations and to promote economic and social development.

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad
and Tobago)

The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, which entered into force on 1 July this year, is a most significant occurrence in the history of disarmament, in that an entire class of nuclear weapons is being eliminated. The success of the recent joint verification experiment augurs well for the future. We look forward to the early conclusion of the strategic arms reduction Treaty so that a 50 per cent cut in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States may become a reality.

While we welcome these positive developments between the super-Powers, we must acknowledge that these bilateral efforts must be grounded in a multilateral framework. Détente will be an ephemeral solution unless and until the international community and the whole of mankind are actively involved in the negotiation of the processes of disarmament, the execution and verification of the measures adopted and the resulting maintenance of international peace and security. I am suggesting that there is an inverse relationship between multilateralism and bilateralism in the disarmament process.

The need for a multilateral approach to the disarmament process is also dictated by current realities. The territories of the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe and China are not being devastated by war at the present time, nor have they been since 1945. The theatres of conflict are located solely in the developing countries; Central America, the Middle East, southern Africa, the Near and Far East are where the devastation and human suffering are taking place. The influence of outside forces in those areas is clearly discernible. The developing countries, therefore, must play an active role in disarmament and in the search for peace and security, not on an isolated, or case-by-case basis, but in the multilateral framework.

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad
and Tobago)

A fraction of the existing nuclear arsenals could bring about environmental, atmospheric and biological catastrophe and the demise of civilization as we know it. It is imperative that the development of new generations of nuclear weapons and of other weapons such as laser and energy weapons and military satellites be prevented. Here again the multilateral approach offers the best possibilities.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, concluded 20 years ago, provided an international framework for the disarmament process. It is regretted that the nuclear Powers have not complied with all the provisions of the Treaty. It is hoped that the Review Conference in 1990 will set the stage for a treaty that can be universally accepted and whose provisions will be complied with and be enforceable.

My delegation accepts that freedom of navigation under international law is an essential element of international trade and commerce. However, the increasing deployment of nuclear weapons by naval vessels is a cause for great concern.

My delegation considers the high seas to be the common heritage of mankind. Equally, we consider outer space to be the patrimony of the human race. Accordingly, the high seas and outer space must be completely free from nuclear weapons. The time seems opportune to elaborate an international convention prohibiting, under legal sanction, nuclear weapons on the high seas and in outer space.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes one of the most effective measures for non-nuclear States to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and represents a positive step in the disarmament process. Trinidad and Tobago is a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which establishes such a zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. We welcome the Declaration on establishing a

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad
and Tobago)

nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, the steps being taken to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the efforts currently being directed to the creation of zones of peace and co-operation in the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic.

More openness and greater transparency in military measures, accompanied by effective confidence-building measures, have a role to play. So, too, would measures to prevent and to detect violations of international commitments, including the application of seismic monitoring.

The recent use of chemical weapons and their proliferation are causes for concern, and we fully support the proposal of the President of France for the convening in January 1989 of an international conference, where it is hoped a convention banning the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons will be concluded.

Increased attention needs to be directed to conventional disarmament, for it is conventional weapons, with increasing sophistication, that are killing and maiming millions of men, women and children. Resolutions of the United Nations already provide a framework for a negotiating process to be undertaken. This should be supplemented by more openness and transparency of arms transfers, which could be accompanied by the establishment of regulations for the sale of arms and an international register of all arms transfers. This should also encompass the so-called black market in arms sales.

The relationship between disarmament and development was established by the Conference on the subject held last year. The stark reality is that the arms race and development are in a competitive relationship as regards the allocation of the world's financial, human and physical resources. As these resources are finite,

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad
and Tobago)

both processes cannot be pursued simultaneously. It is not only the developing countries that are becoming impoverished by the military burden. I am suggesting that the burden of military expenditures has a direct relationship with the economic growth and well-being of the developed countries. Major wars have drained not only the participants, but also the world economy, and in my delegation's view it is a fallacy to believe that war and the preparation for war stimulate the economy and that the research associated with preparedness for war is translated into the productive sectors of the economy.

In the view of my delegation, the economic growth of Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany during the past decade, compared with the economic growth rate of the United States and the Soviet Union for the same period, has a direct relationship to their military burdens. This thesis is borne out by the fact that under perestroika the Soviet Union hopes to reduce military spending, in order to promote civilian economic growth. It is in this context that disarmament - nuclear, conventional, naval, chemical - would promote not only security, but also the economic development of both the developed and the developing countries.

My delegation regrets that the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament did not adopt a final document. Nevertheless, several concrete and constructive proposals were made during the session, and it is the responsibility of the First Committee to identify those areas and to build on them.

(Mr. Mohammed, Trinidad and Tobago)

At the third special session on disarmament, my delegation proposed, through my Prime Minister, that the Secretary-General prepare a report on liability for the illegal transfer and/or use of prohibited weapons and of weapons which cause unnecessary human suffering. It is in that context that, at the instance of my delegation, item 145 was added to the agenda of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

One of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter is that all Members shall refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations. Nevertheless, there is continued use of weapons of mass destruction and weapons which cause unnecessary human suffering. Some attempts have been made to prohibit the use of such weapons. The Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 prohibited the use of dum-dum bullets and the use of poison and poisoned weapons. The Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibited the use of chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare. The Convention concluded at Geneva on 10 October 1980 placed prohibitions and restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.

My delegation is of the view that the time is opportune for the General Assembly to consider the illegal transfer and/or use of prohibited weapons of mass destruction and weapons which cause unnecessary human suffering, as well as appropriate measures for preventing such transfer and/or use, including procedures and mechanisms for increase international co-operation in criminal-justice administration. An appropriate draft resolution is being submitted in the First Committee, and we look forward to the constructive consideration of it by the Committee.

Mr. ESZTERGALYOS (Hungary): Hungary regards the strengthening of European security and co-operation as a central task of its foreign policy. Taking a resolute stand in favour of lowering the level of military confrontation in Europe, reducing military capabilities on the continent and giving the armed forces of the two alliances and of all European States a strictly defensive character, my country believes that the interests of European and global security urgently call for proceeding to a major reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe.

That endeavour of Hungarian foreign policy, along with similar efforts of the Soviet Union and other socialist States, found expression in the joint programme for reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe launched in Budapest in June 1986. On the basis of the ideas put forward in the Budapest Appeal and the corresponding initiative by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), talks between member States of the Warsaw Treaty organization and NATO about the mandate of future negotiations on conventional disarmament in Europe started nearly two years ago and are now approaching a successful conclusion.

An early conclusion of those talks and the Vienna follow-up meeting will, we hope, set in motion a process in which the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments from the Atlantic to the Urals would be closely interrelated with further development and expansion of confidence-building and security-building measures in Europe within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

At the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty organization held at Warsaw in July this year, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty put forward concrete proposals concerning the forthcoming negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe. Quite

(Mr. Eastergalyos, Hungary)

recently, a further step was made in outlining the concrete proposals of the socialist countries on European security, this time on confidence-building and security-building measures. In Budapest, at the meeting of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, a statement on those measures was adopted on 28 and 29 October.

It is hoped that the resumption of work on the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe and the further implementation of the provisions of the Stockholm document will broaden the perspectives for enhancing security in Europe. Further steps in the field of confidence-building and security-building measures would facilitate progress towards the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe and the solution of other disarmament issues, which in turn would create favourable conditions for increased confidence.

In their statement adopted at the Budapest meeting, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty expressed the belief that the negotiations on confidence-building and security-building measures in Europe should be continued as early as 1988. They should be aimed at reducing military confrontation and the risk of armed conflict in Europe, reducing and averting the danger of surprise attack and enhancing mutual security, lending a strictly defensive character to military activities and increasing their openness and predictability, as well as promoting the implementation of disarmament measures. The negotiations should make it possible for the measures elaborated ultimately to cover all activities of all elements of the armed forces of the States participating in the process of security and co-operation in Europe.

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

In the opinion of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, confidence-building and security-building measures should be applied to all military activities of the participating States that affect European security or form part of military actions taking place within the boundaries of Europe. These measures should be substantial, militarily effective and politically binding. As they are an important element of the all-European process, the negotiations should be conducted on the basis of the Madrid mandate.

The Ministers stated that it would be expedient to develop and expand existing confidence-building and security-building measures; further measures could be worked out, comprising measures of constraint, new confidence-building and security-building measures, and measures to increase the openness and predictability of military activities.

Constraint measures would apply to the size and number of simultaneous military exercises and to the duration and frequency of military exercises. They would ban large-scale military exercises and restrict the redeployment of troops and technical equipment. Moreover, they would envisage the limitation of the number of combat-ready military exercises and the number of troops engaged.

New confidence-building and security-building measures would include prior notification of independent activities by air and naval forces, invitation of observers according to appropriate parameters, inspection of such activities and agreement on restrictive measures, modalities for the exchange of annual calendars of such activities, extension of confidence-building and security-building measures to the territories of all the countries participating in the CSCE process, creation of zones of confidence and security in Europe and the adjoining seas and oceans, and the establishment of a European military-risk-reduction centre and preventing surprise attack, which would signify a qualitatively new step in strengthening mutual confidence.

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

Measures to increase the openness and predictability of military activities would cover the regular exchange of data on armed forces and their activities, including forces deployed at military bases around Europe; exchange of information on the structure and substance of military budgets; refraining from building up armed forces and renouncing the establishment of new military bases on the territories of foreign States; setting up observation posts at co-ordinated sites within the zone of application of confidence- and security-building measures; creation of special operative communication links between the countries concerned; improvement of conditions for inspection and for widening the scope of work for observers; the use of the latest technical equipment; development of relations between political and military representatives of the participating States; and extension of the practice of exchange of military-diplomatic representations and military delegations.

The implementation of those measures is intended to ensure that the military potentials of the States participating in the negotiations become strictly defensive in nature. In that connection the States represented at the meeting have stated that they stand for the elimination of military bases on foreign territories and have reaffirmed their positions concerning the simultaneous dissolution of the military-political alliances.

The States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, while outlining their own approach to confidence- and security-building measures, expressed their readiness to consider other possible proposals designed to enhance mutual confidence and security and to accelerate the process of disarmament in Europe.

In the opinion of States parties to the Warsaw Treaty the convening of an all-European summit meeting to discuss issues concerning the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe, with the participation of the United

(Mr. Esztergalyos, Hungary)

States and Canada, would also contribute to the elaboration and implementation of new confidence- and security-building measures.

As hosts to the meeting of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, we hope that the statement adopted at the Budapest meeting will contribute to a resumption of the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe in a constructive and result-oriented atmosphere.

We are convinced that endeavours for an early conclusion, with substantial results, of the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe would not only pave the way for starting negotiations as early as 1988 on the reduction of armed forces and armaments and on confidence- and security-building measures in Europe but would also give impetus to the expansion of co-operation in the economic, trade, scientific and technological spheres, in the field of ecological security and in humanitarian issues, as well as to the implementation of human rights.

Mr. HOHELFELLNER (Austria): My delegation's statement today deals exclusively with one topic, namely bacteriological and chemical weapons. I should like to begin by stating that Austria condemns any use of such weapons wherever, by whoever, against whomever. That is the reason we actively participate in the deliberations on the First Committee on this subject, as well as engage more actively in the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Because of our deep concern about the implications of biological warfare, as well as in pursuance of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, Austria supported an initiative on the exchange of data concerning that Convention at the last session of the General Assembly. In the

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

context of biological weapons, it seemed important to us to provide data on a global basis in order to build confidence among all States. For that reason, my delegation is once more submitting a draft resolution on the Second Review Conference of the biological (bacteriological) weapons Convention, since we consider it necessary to stress the importance of the information obtained so far as well as to call upon all States that have not yet exchanged information and data to do so. In that connection we are grateful for the support of the delegations co-sponsoring our draft resolution this year also, and I am pleased to announce that we have been able to enlarge the number of sponsors.

The recent use of chemical weapons drastically showed the urgent need for the States of the international community to take action. Victims of the use of those weapons are treated in Austrian hospitals, and that, along with abhorrent reports in the mass media, created an ever growing awareness on the part of the Austrian public. It was in that regard that the Austrian Parliament took the decision that Austria should be more actively involved in all initiatives aimed at eliminating those weapons of mass destruction once and for all.

It is also in the context of a growing awareness that - in addition to the strong condemnation of any use of chemical weapons - there is an increasing need to take concrete action. Austria therefore took an initiative on exchange of data concerning a chemical-weapons convention.

For my delegation, exchange of data constitutes the corner-stone of all confidence-building measures and therefore it believes it should be central to our common interest in taking measures in the immediate future. Besides, it is the substantial progress reached in the work of the Conference on Disarmament on a multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons that makes it

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

indispensable to exchange data on a global level. The information provided would serve as an operative input for specific technical questions still to be solved, such as the size of the future inspectorate or the organization as a whole.

Moreover, it should make all States more aware of the need to take decisions on national policies concerning the future convention. In concrete terms the actual language of our initiative recognizes the importance of declarations by all States, whether or not they possess chemical weapons, and the provision of chemical-industry data relevant to the future convention. We consider this initiative to be an interim confidence-building measure that should be followed up next year on a more specific basis. In that context I should like to express gratitude to all delegations that supported our initiative.

Concerning this year's initiative on measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, I should like to stress our continuing strong support for the active role played by the Secretary-General concerning investigations into alleged use of chemical weapons. Past reports published under the aegis of the Secretary-General have undoubtedly helped to increase the awareness of the problems posed and to influence national policy-makers to take strong positions.

This year's draft resolution on measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and to support the conclusion of a chemical-weapons convention, once again submitted by the Australian delegation, which plays an outstandingly active role in disarmament, stresses once more the role of the verification of the use of chemical weapons undertaken by the Secretary-General. At the same time it points out the importance of a multilateral, effective and verifiable chemical-weapons convention. We are therefore whole-heartedly supporting that initiative.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Let me now briefly touch upon the initiative launched by President Reagan and supported by President Mitterrand of convening a conference to strengthen the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Any initiative aimed at eliminating the possible use of chemical weapons is welcome. The important work undertaken in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament on a multilateral, effective and verifiable chemical-weapons convention should thus be enhanced. The Paris Conference will certainly create a more positive political climate and a public-opinion environment conducive to strengthening the ongoing negotiations in Geneva.

Mr. ZIPPORI (Israel): Allow me on the occasion of my first intervention in the debate to offer my sincerest congratulations to Mr. Roche on his election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee. All of us who have experienced working with him in the meetings of the Committee are confident of his ability to direct the deliberations. I also wish to congratulate all the other officers of the Committee.

Every year when we gather here at the General Assembly, it is only natural that we take stock of what has happened or what has not happened in the course of the past year. Looking at the world scene, there are many obvious and encouraging signs, especially the ratification and beginning of the implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty, the improved relations between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the beginning of the solution of some of the difficult regional problems. However, obviously each of us will concentrate primarily on our own region and the problems that beset us. While we are pleased to note that the fighting between Iraq and Iran has ceased and a United Nations sponsored cease-fire has entered into force, even here the world must note with horror the continued use of chemical weapons, this time against the dissident

(Mr. Zippori, Israel)

Kurdish minority within Iraq. In regard to these weapons I cannot do better than to quote the statement of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on 7 June, before the third special session devoted to disarmament, when he said:

"The Government of Israel maintains the deep conviction that the use of chemical weapons is a most odious method of destruction of human life. We are greatly troubled by the introduction of those means of calamity into the Middle East and the world's indifference to the brutal usage of chemical weapons, creating thousands of innocent victims. The presence and use of chemical weapons constitute a real threat to the peace of our region and to the peace of the entire world. All enlightened peoples should be alarmed by the arbitrary use of such weapons.

"Our awareness in Israel of the dangers to humanity posed by chemical weapons as well as our deep concern regarding the proliferation of chemical weapons have led my Government to take steps directed at limiting that proliferation. Those steps involve strict legal control over the export of any material which might be used in the production of such weapons."

(A/S-15/PV.11, p. 81)

Specifically referring to the use of such weapons by Iraq, he stated:

"Lastly, I must decry and protest at the employment and production of poison gas in our region. By its own admission, Iraq has used that vicious means of indiscriminate killing in its war with Iran. That is a gross and blatant violation of the Geneva Protocol, to which Iraq is a signatory. The use of poison gas in the Iran-Iraq war has also been established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, albeit without his identifying the culprit. Syria, too, has built facilities for the production of poison gas and its leaders have brazenly threatened to use it against Israel." (Ibid., pp. 81-82)

(Mr. Zippori, Israel)

It is in this spirit that the Government of Israel declares its full support for the proposal made by the President of the United States to the General Assembly on 26 September 1988 and the invitation of the Government of France, calling on all signatories to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to convene a conference in order to reconfirm at the highest political level and in the most solemn manner the world's dedication to the total elimination of chemical warfare.

With regard to the ongoing negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the drafting of a comprehensive convention for the total elimination of chemical weapons, my delegation, at the special session, suggested the possibility of exploring the use of a regional approach, not instead of a comprehensive treaty but as a supplementary agreement which might be useful in solving some of the problems that might arise in ensuring universal adherence. Obviously such an agreement could be arrived at only on the basis of arrangements to be freely negotiated between all States in the particular region.

The urgency of this problem has not abated with the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran, for not only have those two States - and especially Iraq - continued to develop their chemical-weapon arsenals, but there is conclusive evidence that Syria and Libya are also moving rapidly along the same path; thus the threat of chemical warfare lies heavily over Israel and for that matter over all the other countries in the area.

These countries have not only acquired and developed chemical weapons but have also been acquiring devastating means of delivery in the form of surface-to-surface missiles with ranges that effectively threaten all their neighbours and can even reach beyond the borders of the region. These missiles were used with blatant disregard for civilian casualties by both Iraq and Iran. The most recent example is Saudi Arabia, which has purchased missiles with a range of over 2000 km which can easily reach any target in the Middle East from the Arabian Peninsula.

(Mr. Zippori, Israel)

But it is not only such "new" weapons that are proliferating in the Middle East. According to the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency publication World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers (1987):

"Arms transfers to developing countries have reached very high levels; in the five years 1982-1986, these countries imported \$180.3 billion worth of arms. At the center of this arms explosion stands the Middle East. This region accounted for over 35 per cent of the world's arms imports during 1986. Not only do these weapons add to the military instability of the region, they also result in a severe economic drain. The Middle East has the world's highest military spending burden of any region when viewed as a percentage of GNP - it was estimated to be over 16 per cent in 1986."

It is that situation, which has only worsened over the past few years, which led my Government to suggest in this Committee in 1986 that the time had come for all the countries in the region to enter into free and direct negotiations, to examine the possibilities of arriving at some sort of agreement for the limitation of armaments, following the example of the balanced-force negotiations in Europe for a balanced reduction of forces.

You will have noticed, Sir, that my delegation affirms the merits of regional initiatives for regional problems. Such initiatives are often more credible than universal declarations. They necessarily involve direct negotiations between the parties to create a climate receptive to understanding and compromise.' Such a climate is especially necessary in our strife-torn region in the Middle East.

It is also in this spirit that we have repeatedly invited the States of the Middle East region to work out with us the elements of a nuclear-weapon-free zone that will generate confidence in each other, for the present and for the future.

(Mr. Zippori, Israel)

We should consider ourselves fortunate to be able to draw on the experience of precedents and the wise and express recommendations of the Palme Commission, which were sanctioned by the United Nations.

It is clear that the modalities of free and direct negotiation between the parties and an eventual mutuality of reassurances are the necessary concomitant of a credible nuclear-weapon-free zone. Repudiation of direct contact between the parties of a region eliminates the element of confidence, which a nuclear-weapon-free zone is designed to generate.

It is our hope that the spirit of accommodation which has begun to assert itself in international affairs, will also inspire our neighbours to seek regional accommodation with us for the benefit of all.

Mr. SAVUA (Fiji): Science and technology have made an enormous contribution to the betterment on life of earth. They have helped to propel man to the moon, opened up new vistas of knowledge and information, and virtually shaped human destiny. But science and technology have also spawned weapons of mass destruction that have become the curse of mankind. Nuclear weapons today are universally feared and condemned. Any use of such weapons, deliberate or accidental, would create a catastrophe of unprecedented magnitude. The report of the Secretary-General (A/43/351) gives a graphic and frightening summary of the effects and consequences of a nuclear war. There would be no winners; we would all be losers.

It is because of the dread of nuclear weapons, and of the horrors of the destruction they would cause, that no other issue in the field of arms control has seen so much international deliberation and negotiation as that of the cessation of nuclear-weapon testing. Since the late 1950s the General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions calling for a nuclear-test ban, several of them containing outright condemnation of nuclear tests. The question has been on the agenda of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament ever since its establishment in 1951.

Eighteen years after the first nuclear bomb was used in warfare three of the five nuclear-weapon States signed the treaty banning nuclear-weapon testing in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. But underground testing continues, in complete disregard of the widespread and growing international condemnation of all nuclear-weapon testing.

The countries of the South Pacific have long been strong advocates of the cessation of all nuclear-weapon testing. It was out of that commitment and our desire to keep the South Pacific region free from nuclear proliferation that as early as 1975 the leaders of the South Pacific Forum, at their meeting in Tonga, reiterated their

(Mr. Savua, Fiji)

"strong opposition to nuclear weapon tests in all environments and called for renewed international efforts towards a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and general and complete disarmament. In particular, the Forum emphasized the importance of keeping the region free from the risk of nuclear contamination and of involvement in a nuclear conflict and commended the idea of establishing a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific as a means of achieving that aim."

In the years that followed, the countries of the South Pacific Forum pursued the idea. This culminated in the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty - the Treaty of Rarotonga as it has come to be called - which was opened for signature at the Forum meeting in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in 1985, and which entered into force on 11 December 1986. One year later, on 16 December 1987, the Soviet Union signed Protocols 2 and 3, which they have since ratified. On 11 February 1987 China also signed the two Protocols and has now ratified them. Regrettably, the other three nuclear-weapon States - namely France, the United Kingdom and the United States - have refused to sign any of the three Protocols, all of which, in fact, apply to them. While members of the South Pacific Forum have been disappointed by the decision of those three States, there was some gratification when two of them said they would respect the Treaty and its Protocols insofar as they are not inconsistent with their practices and activities in the region.*

The third State, however, not only has refused to sign the Protocols but shows scant respect for the Treaty by its continued nuclear testing in our part of the world. It is doing so not only in complete disregard of the Treaty of Rarotonga but in total defiance of public opinion, both regional and international.

*The Chairman took the Chair.

(Mr. Savua, Fiji)

My delegation joins others in applauding the new relationship between the two super-Powers and their efforts towards achieving a 50 per cent reduction in strategic weapons. However, for as long as nuclear weapons remain the major component of their defence strategy they will have an ongoing need to test these weapons, and while that strategy is maintained other nuclear-weapon States will see this as an excuse to keep their weapons, and the tests will continue unabated. It is often said that total nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved by a quantum leap as that would create an unacceptable defence imbalance. However, for as long as nuclear deterrence continues we would urge the nuclear-weapon States to check their testing and not to contaminate the regions that have been declared nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Chemical weapons were tested in our region some 40 years ago. There is no evidence that tests have been conducted since. However, the continued stockpiling and use of what can only be described as an inhuman weapon is cause for concern for us all. Unendurable pain is inflicted on the victims, and the innocent, the aged, children and babes in arms are not spared. My delegation supports the moves to put a stop to the production and use of these brutal weapons. We welcome the initiative of France in undertaking to host the Conference on Chemical Weapons in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989.

Another matter of some concern to us is the recent tendency for the industrialized nations to want to use developing countries for the dumping of their toxic and nuclear wastes. It is unscrupulous and unacceptable that some industrial nations seek to take advantage of the economic weakness of some developing countries to offload their wastes in this way. The potential danger facing us and our region is obvious: while we are distant from any immediate war theatre, and indeed from any nuclear stockpile, we face the possible conversion of our region into a lethal dumping-ground.

(Mr. Savua, Fiji)

We do not believe that any country, irrespective of size or isolation, can be immune from the consequences of a nuclear holocaust. The horrors of a nuclear war and the long-lasting effects of its devastation will hang over our globe like a death shroud. It is because of this threat and for the sake of the generations to come that we voice our concerns here today.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.